ST. MIHIEL TOWN WRITES SEPT. 13 INTO ITS HISTORY

Cure Who Never Sought Cellar Tells of Four Bitter Years

GERMANS ENSLAVE 67 MEN

Little Company of Citizens Is Herded Off Just Before Attack Crashes Through

For four years the city of St. Mihiel was a slave of Germany. For four years the helpless people, whom the swift tide of the 1914 battle had caught within its gates, knew every hour the degrading presence and the cold, unscrupulous overlordship of the Prussian officer. The story of that bondage can be read in their bent backs and their pinched, apprehensive faces. It can be told in terms of one man, the Curé-Doyen of St. Mihiel.

The Germans found him the guiding spirit of a placid and prosperous parish, himself a plump and genial priest, beloved of his people. The Germans left him a gaunt and haggard man, the story of his people's suffering and privation written deep in his sunken cheeks. But they left him more than ever beloved. His once gentle eyes shine now with the prophetic fire of a Savonarola. The flash of them and the dauntless poise of his high-held head are eloquent of France's unquenched, unquenchable spirit.

Pretty steadily off and on since the war began, St. Mihiel has known air raids and bombardments as street after street of shattered windows, torn roadway and half demolished houses testify today.

Never in the Cellar

Not once in all the years of captivity did Monsieur le Curé take refuge in the cellar. Always he and his mother, a cheery old lady whose years are now four score and seven, sat in their house in the Rue Carnot and laughed at the proud German officers scuttling underground.

They themselves would not hide from the good French shells, and they took to the cellars for the first time in four years of bombardment when the invaders, having fled, sent back their vengeful flyers to bomb the lost city of St. Mihiel. On a table in the curé's study are the many shells and shell fragments that have just missed him as he made the rounds of his parish. His little souvenirs of Providence, he calls the collection, with just a ghost of a smile.

The day St. Mihiel was liberated, that September 13 at whose dawn the waiting people met, with streaming eyes and outstretched arms, the first poilu trotting into the city, is known on all St. Mihiel tongues as the Day of Deliverance. For the coming of that day all enslaved French villages are waiting now with a new hope.

Almost on Battle Line

Perhaps that hope was always quickened and the thrall always the more galling at St. Mihiel, because the line of battle stretched so close to the city's gates, so close that the imprisoned citizens felt they could almost touch it. The blue-clad poilus in their trenches could be seen from the 11th century tower of the curé's church; the soldiers from their outposts could see the people moving about the captive city's streets.

Thus was the suspense of the captivity always at tension point, and of the severe measures needed to keep the city in check, one may read the evidence today on the walls of the houses where, still legible, are such signs as this one:

"Whoever is convicted of communication with the French, by whatever means, will be immediately shot. Yesterday an inhabitant fired on a German officer. If this action occurs again, the house from which the shot comes will be immediately burned and a hostage shot."

Enough Food to Sustain Life

Of food, the 2,200 civilians had what was sent them regularly by the Spanish-American commission—meat and milk and flour and sugar—enough to keep life in them, but not much more than that, as the hollow cheeks tell plainly enough. The first American soldiers filing into the city were a little startled to find old, familiar canned goods smiling down at them from the shelves of the ravitaillement depot, as if to say: "We beat you to it, doughboys."

The men of the city were under surveillance every hour of the day and night. The women had to work at the ever humiliating tasks of making the beds, sweeping the rooms and generally cleaning up after the complacent German officers, tasks of which the memory will never leave them.

The children had to study German. Certain hours of that ugly language were inserted, at the point of a gun, in the local school curriculum, but Monsieur le Curé will tell you with a proud chuckle that, somehow, the children became unaccountably stupid when it came to this course, and even in four years managed to acquire precious little.

Always Under Suspicion

In the minds of the German authorities, Monsieur le Curé was always a suspect. They suspected him of a too active sympathy with that line of blue soldiers, who, God knows, had all his prayers.

The officers had certain reasons for believing he might be keeping a damning record of their iniquities, and for such a record they vainly searched his papers again and again. They ransacked every drawer, they explored every inch of floor and wall space. They even burrowed into his garden to see what treachery he might be hiding under the roots of his flowers. But they found nothing. Whether or not there ever was anything to find, only the curé knows today.

They did find on church property two old military bicycles hidden there two years before by French soldiers when they were driven out of St. Mihiel, and they did find that on certain pieces of wantonly torn church decoration, recovered from the dung-heaps, he had affixed the phrase "Vandals, God will not bless you." For which offenses he was packed off for two months and a half of imprisonment at Briey, across the frontier. As for the vicar, a young priest of only 30 years, he was spirited away for 17 months of imprisonment. They took him without saying why. They returned him without saying why.

Hope of Deliverance Mounts

The vicar could read German, and from the German newspapers, which were all that ever reached them, he used to glean for Monsieur le Curé the news of America's entrance on the crusade. From then on, the hope of deliverance mounted higher and higher.

It thrilled them to learn last January, as learn they did from a hundred sources, that Americans had entered the line in their own Lorraine, not more than an hour's brisk walk from St. Mihiel. To be sure, the German officers laughed loudly over their dinners at the American effort. They laughed louder than ever after their raid on Seicheprey.

The worried townsfolk, who heard these things, came whispering to Monsieur le Curé for comfort. America was young and strong, he told them, and had a long way to come. Like St. Paul, they must thank God and take courage.

Late in August came the first hint of the approaching retreat. It came in the form of a sudden German demand on all the valuables left in the town. Particularly all the linen and wool and copper were raped from the houses and shipped away. They took even the warm blanket from the bed of the curé's mother. They took even the vessels from the high altar—all save the golden crucifix, before which even the German hands faltered.

Herded Off to Germany

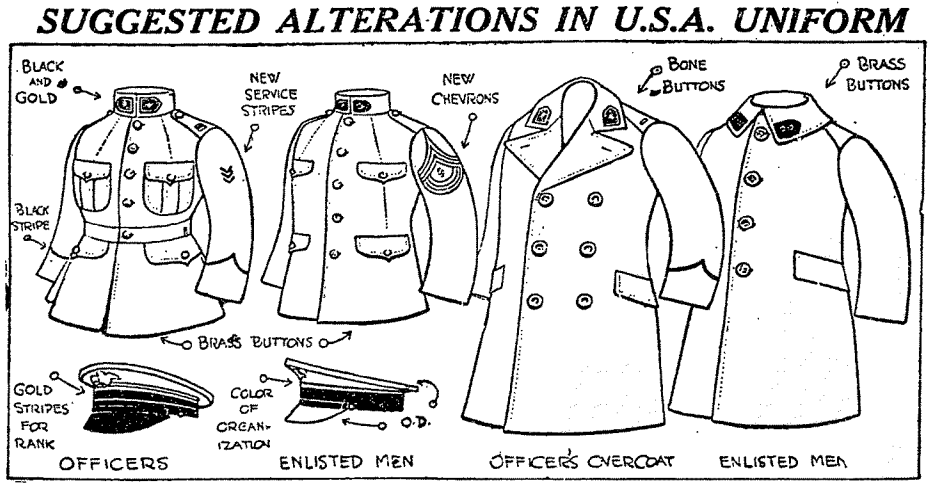
That the hour of deliverance was at hand, St. Mihiel knew on the afternoon of Thursday, September 12, when, at 5:30, every man in the city between the ages of 16 and 45 was notified to report to the open place beside the German cemetery, ready to leave at 6. A truck would carry their scant belongings. For themselves, they would be driven along the road to Germany like a wretched herd.

The news came with the abruptness of a thunderclap. The memory of that parting is seared forever into the mind of St. Mihiel. The German officers snapped out their orders. The men and boys were huddled desolate in the rain. Their mothers, wives, children wept around them. Erect in the heart of the group, the gaunt priest stood, his eyes alight with compassion and something more than that, his hands outstretched in blessing on each one of his pelits, thus driven into slavery on the eve of the city's redemption.

There were 67 of them. One was the vicar. The memory of their going fell like a shadow across the jubilation of Deliverance Day. For many hours all nerves were taut with the vain hope that before the 67 had plodded as far as Vigneulles, the American troops would have blocked the path to Germany. But it was not to be.

The hope, however, that the 67 will soon be back runs high today in St. Mihiel, where once more mass is said for the French soldiers in the old church and where, as never before, the base of Jeanne d'Arc's lovely statue is a very mound of fragrant, rain-drenched, new-cut flowers, laid at her feet in love and thankfulness and hope.

SUGGESTED ALTERATIONS IN U.S.A. UNIFORM



READING, WRITING, UNIVERSITY WORK, IN A.E.F. COURSES

Continued from Page 1

now being conducted in the United States by the Army Educational Commission of the Y.M.C.A. These teachers will be drawn from high schools, colleges and universities throughout the States. It is expected also that Army officers will act as instructors in certain branches for which they are fitted by their civil life callings. Instructors from French lycées will continue to teach French. It is estimated that more than 150,000 soldiers are now systematically studying French.

The teaching of English will not be one of the least important features of the new system. As an example of accomplishments in teaching English, 17 negro stevedores who had never been able to read or write English signed a payroll for the first time last month.

Throughout the whole educational system the effort will be made to serve those soldiers who have not had the opportunity to learn English thoroughly. In general, also, the courses are based on the hope that the Army may return to the United States with a more vivid appreciation of the economic resources and economic and civic problems of their own land.

A study of America and American citizenship is to be woven into the courses.

MOTHER TOLD HER GERMANS WOULDN'T BE THERE FOREVER

Continued from Page 1

joy as she dragged Marie Rose after her down into the cellar, where they would be safe from the bursting shells. One shell hit the house and tore its way through the chimney.

Toward evening the bombardment passed on; only now and then did a shell explode near the farm. The mother and daughter had decided to come out of their shelter when someone scratched on the cellar door and a voice—not French, not German—spoke to them. The voice spoke some more—very gruff this time—and both Marie Rose and her mother crept nearer each other.

Finally, there came a heavy pounding at the door and it opened with a bang. An American private slipped down the stairs, his bayonet pointed straight at the two huddled figures in the corner. "Oh!" said the voice. "Pardon moi."

When Marie Rose and her mother learned the truth, they insisted on kissing the American's hands. And, if the truth be known, the big American private, who hails from Kentucky, admits with a grin that he was really kissed smack on the cheek in spite of the protection his whiskers afforded him.

LATE HUN CAMP LIKE BACK HOME BUNGALOW PARK

Americans Move in Where Dispossessed Foe Had Squad Cottages

PUSH-BUTTON FOR BUTLER

Officer's Clubhouse Also Has Wall Paper and Electric Lights—Chalet for Soldiers

The Forest of the Lovely Willow is the somewhat misleading name of a young woods in what was once the St. Mihiel salient. There, laid out like a modern suburb on a development company's blue print, is an attractive and surprisingly elaborate German camp, capable of absorbing thousands upon thousands of German soldiers and a striking example of the German aptitude in the fine art of being comfortable.

The Germans who laid down its pretty walks and reared under the trees its myriad warm and cosy houses back in 1914 would have laughed themselves sick if anyone had ever told them that that camp would one day be occupied by soldiers from America. The Americans involved, then engaged, as they were for the most part, in pursuing the nimble dollar across a continent several thousand miles distant, would have laughed even harder.

Yet, for a time last week, a passing American division did put up for several nights in that very camp. Though the roads were like porridge underfoot and though every tree dripped from the equinoxial rains, that division was never more comfortable in all its days in France.

Like a Back Home Park

The camp in the Forest of the Lovely Willow resembles nothing so much as one of those rustic amusement parks in America where they have band concerts in the summer and where basket parties can supplement the sandwiches Aunt Ellen made if you care to buy (at prohibitive prices) ice cream and sarsaparilla.

There is a network of substantial walks with rustic railings, and everywhere the German sign to guide you through the maze. At certain central points—clearings, in some cases the loose doughboy on his tour of inspection finds such camp institutions as a quite marvelous rifle range, with its moving target, or perhaps the Lichtspiele or movie house, where the Boche used to watch the international antics of Herr Karl Chaplin.

In the next clearing is the Offizier-Kasino, or Officers' Club, a mighty snug little retreat, with inviting settees upholstered in red, pretty wall paper, brightly globed electric lamps, a butler's pantry in the offing and, luxury of luxuries, an electric push button to summon things therefrom.

Next door stands what appears to have been a rest house for the soldiers, a pretty little chalet with its walls all plastered with picture postcards. They were pictures calculated to please. One shows the entry of the German army into Brussels, and you would gather from that picture that no guests were ever received more cordially in any city since the world began.

Another shows London being rapidly destroyed by a giant Zeppelin. It is only too apparent from this picture that poor old London had just about one more day to live before it crumbled into the Thames.

Enter Another Army

When the Yanks passed by, this rest house was appropriated immediately by the Salvation Army and there was then enacted a most incongruous scene—a Salvation Army lassie way up near the front selling candy to doughboys just out of the line. And the confections she had to sell were those rare and exquisite candied fruits which cannot be had for less than six francs a box. The doughboys, having decided they were worth it, bought up the whole stock in a few moments.

Then come rows upon rows of officer billets and rows upon rows of little snug cottages, each a thatch-roofed, well-floored, moss-walled bungalow of the sort you see by the hundred dotting the shores of Adirondack lakes. Next is the bowling alley, next the power house, next the hospital, next the central kitchen and so on and so on, a model city, where German divisions could recuperate and where support battalions could keep comfortable and alert at the same time.

All this patiently perfected camp the Germans left so hurriedly on September 12 that they did not have time to cut a single wire, fire a single cottage or plant a single mine.

WHALE SAUSAGE INVENTED

[By Cable to THE STARS AND STRIPES]

AMERICA, Sept. 26.—The patriotic rumor comes from Boston that the town has shattered German frankfurter prestige by inventing whale sausage, which is expected to revolutionize the seaside resorts.